

The House of Representatives passed H.R. 6388, the Government Accountability Office Improvement Act of 2008. Chairman Henry A. Waxman and 18 other committee chairs introduced this legislation to strengthen the Government Accountability Office and restore GAO's authority to pursue litigation if documents are improperly withheld from the agency.

"At a time when our budget deficits are soaring to record levels, we cannot afford to waste billions on poorly managed contracts and bloated federal programs," said Chairman Waxman. "We need a strong GAO to root out waste and corruption."

One key provision of the legislation repudiates the district court decision in *Walker v. Cheney* and reaffirms GAO's authority to go to court when agencies or the White House refuse to provide access to records.

Other provisions of this bill give GAO authority to interview federal employees and administer oaths. The bill also affirms GAO's right to obtain records from three agencies that have sometimes thwarted GAO oversight by denying access to documents: the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Federal Trade Commission.

Finally, the bill creates a reporting mechanism so that Congress will be informed when federal agencies do not cooperate with GAO.